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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/2014  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KS](#)  
SUBJECT: SEVENTH U.S.-ROK SECURITY POLICY INITIATIVE MEETING

Classified By: A/DCM Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (S) SUMMARY: At the seventh U.S.-ROK Security Policy Initiative (SPI) meeting in Seoul, March 21, the two sides agreed to work toward a shorter and less detailed Comprehensive Security Assessment (CSA), noted significant progress on the Joint Vision Study, and reaffirmed the commitment to develop a roadmap on future command relations. On the key issue of camp returns, DUSD Lawless, stressing that the LaPorte Plan represents the last and final offer on the issue, outlined the USG's plan for undertaking clean-up measures related to the return of facilities to the ROK. With respect to the progress of Yongsan/LPP relocation, the ROKG insisted on no USFK-funded construction until the ongoing environmental impact assessment (EIA) and an estimate on landfill requirements were completed. The two sides agreed to meet at a working-level to resolve this issue in the near future. On mission transfers, the ROKG agreed to finalize the terms of reference (TOR) and have it ready for signing by the end of March. The two sides also agreed to seek additional transfers of responsibilities and set a timetable for implementation. The next round of SPI will be held on May 18-19 in Washington. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) The seventh round of SPI talks was held in Seoul March 21. The new Assistant Minister of Defense for Policy, LTG(R) Kwon An-do, headed the ROK side. DUSD Richard Lawless headed the U.S. side.

JOINT ALLIANCE STUDIES  
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13. (S) After a brief exchange of introductory remarks, the ROK side described the state of play on the Comprehensive Security Assessment (CSA). Kwon noted that the assessment still had many problems and proposed a new approach in which the report is streamlined into a much shorter and less controversial assessment. MG Park from the Korea Defense Intelligence Agency explained that in the "CSA-lite," detailed assessments on ROK's neighboring countries would be reduced significantly. Lawless expressed appreciation for the ROK's attempt to draft a streamlined CSA without an annex. However, he noted that the U.S. had already shortened the part on the threat from China in direct response to ROK concerns and sensitivities. In return, he requested the ROK to make appropriate changes in the Japan section, taking into consideration the political realities of the U.S.-Japan alliance and the military access granted by Japan to the defense of the ROK.

14. (S) Lawless also noted that the U.S. position on the CSA is that the downsized CSA would only be acceptable if it contributed and served as a foundation for the Joint Vision Study (JVS). If the CSA failed to achieve its intended purpose, the two sides should consider terminating the CSA. Responding to Lawless' request for draft "CSA-lite," Kwon agreed to provide a full copy of the new CSA as soon as possible, no later than April 15. Lawless said that the U.S. side would finish review of the new draft by May 10 and that if no agreement was reached before the next SPI the two sides should consider the CSA terminated.

15. (S) On the Joint Vision Study, Lawless stated that the U.S. had no objections to the results of the study as presented and was pleased that it had been completed on time. He proposed presenting the study at the next SCM in October.

16. (S) On the Command Relations Study (CRS), the discussion centered on questions over the signing of the Terms of Reference (TOR) and a timeline for the transfer of responsibilities. Kwon said that there were no problems with the TOR, and he expected the TOR to be signed at the end of March. Lawless inquired whether the TOR had any changes and promised to get back to Kwon after reviewing it. Lawless emphasized that the TOR must include a timeline and details on how both sides will proceed. In response, Kwon said the ROK could give some timelines on mission transfers. However the TOR states that the timeline will be developed in 2007, and it would be difficult to set up a detailed schedule on command relations at this time. MG Thiessen of USFK J-5 pointed out that although it would take a lot of work and time to develop a timeline, if the target year goals were not established, there would be no way to provide an execution timeframe by 2007. Kwon agreed that the ROK would formulate a target year, including a detailed timeline with a fixed target date for transfer of wartime operational control, in time for this year's Security Consultative Meeting (SCM).

#### Camp Returns

17. (S) Camp returns and environmental clean up remained a contentious issue. The ROK Ministry of Environment (MOE), while not explicit in their rejection of the LaPorte Plan, presented a counter-proposal. Director Kim from MOE explained that "bio-slurping" might have the immediate impact of cleaning up the top layer of ground water but in the long run contaminants absorbed in the lower levels of the soil would eventually leach back into the groundwater. Therefore, MOE proposed to adopt a more exhaustive method to excavate the contaminated area. In recognition of the U.S. commitment to the LaPorte proposal, however, MOE called for both the U.S. and ROK plans to be implemented for a trial 2-3 month period, after which an experts technical committee would convene and compare the results. The committee would then adopt the method of higher performance to be applied to problematic bases. Kim explained that MOE's plan was not to go with a plan of higher cost, but a more effective approach within the allocated budget.

18. (S) Lawless inquired whether MND and MOFAT had any comments on MOE's presentation. Kwon responded that given the very technical nature of the matter, MND and MOFAT had nothing further to add to the discussion. When pressed by Lawless, Kwon replied that MOE's proposal was the common proposal of the ROKG. Lawless noted that the MOE counterproposal seemed to imply that the LaPorte Plan was unacceptable to the ROK and that it lacked technical merit. When asked by Lawless to clarify whether any contamination that the USG would not clean up will eventually be cleaned up by someone else, Kwon responded that the ROKG would have to do so since land space was so valuable. Kwon argued that based on ROK's experience with the excavation method used on a ROK military base in Busan, he thought it might be worthwhile to compare both plans.

19. (S) MOE's Kim explained that the ROK did not make any

assumptions as to the effectiveness of the U.S. plan. However, he was concerned with the rebounding effect that after six months of clean up, the ROK would have to pick up the tab on additional remediation work. His ministry's view was to achieve the best result. COL. Wilson of USFK questioned the ROK's presentation, which covered remediation in fourteen locations and cleaning up fuels and heavy metals in the soil. He observed that the ROK plan was much more than technical adjustments to the U.S. proposal. Kim responded that the MOE counter-proposal assumed the informal cost estimate on bio-slurping represented a programmed dollar amount and sought to come up with a more effective clean up method within that budget.

¶10. (S) Lawless explained that it was unacceptable for the U.S. to expand the clean up from five camps to fourteen, as well as to different contaminants. Furthermore, when the LaPorte Plan was proposed in January, the ROK side-- Ministers of Defense and Environment-- had indicated that the proposal would be accepted. However, at SPI 6, the U.S. had asked for a formal ROKG acceptance of the plan, and the ROKG delegation stated it was not authorized to respond. Instead of a firm answer, the ROK has made a counter-proposal, despite repeated explanations that the U.S. offer made at SPI 6 was the United States' last, best, and final offer. He informed the ROK delegation that OSD would be sending a letter within the next two weeks on how the U.S. will proceed with clean up. Kwon and Kim implored the U.S. side to engage in further dialogue on the issue and hold off on the action letter in the spirit of the alliance.

#### Security Cooperation Update

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¶11. (S) The PACOM representative gave a briefing on the history of Khaan Quest and invited the ROK's participation in KQ 2006. In a preliminary response, Kwon said the ROK supported Khaan Quest 2006 but had not made a final decision on ROK participation in the exercise. He acknowledged that the exercise was in line with the ROK's commitment to Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) and built on previous ROK PKO experience. However, Kwon said the issue required careful review as all previous ROK PKOs had been on a bilateral basis and Khaan Quest 2006 would be their first multilateral PKO exercise. He promised to respond by mid-April on the method and the scope of participation for KQ 2006 in August. The ROK was also invited to attend a planning conference on KQ 2006 scheduled for April 17th in Hawaii.

#### Mission Transfers

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¶12. (S) MG Thiessen of USFK J-5 expressed appreciation for the ROK's successful rescue of a U.S. fighter pilot after he crashed in the West Sea and cited this operation as an example of the ROK's success in accepting the mission transfer for Search and Rescue operations. Thiessen sought the ROK's agreement on further mission transfers prior to the SCM, and stated that this would require signing of the TOR to meet deadlines and obligations on both sides. Kwon agreed to establish a working group to identify missions for transfer and also consider ROK's capability to accept those missions.

#### Base Relocation/Consolidation

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¶13. (S) While reviewing the progress of Yongsan/LPP relocation plans, the ROK side expressed concerns about any visible U.S. construction on land undergoing a four-season Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), as it would spark a public outcry, and recommended that the U.S. wait until the conclusion of the study to begin construction. Kwon noted that the EIA was on track to be completed by September of this year. Lawless expressed satisfaction with an earlier completion date of the EIA. He noted that although in practical terms it would be impossible for the U.S. to begin construction on the site until after the projected end of the

EIA, the U.S. had the right to start construction on SOFA granted land at any time. The SOFA superseded domestic Korean law. Both sides agreed that further discussion of the issue at SPI would not be productive and that it should be addressed at the working level.

¶14. (S) The ROK expressed concern over public protests on the base relocation and was actively engaged to prevent anti-U.S. activists from gaining access to the area to be used for expansion at Camp Humphreys. The ROK presented a map of planned modifications around the perimeter of the area, which included earthwork, fences and guard posts to limit access and inhibit the ability for residents to plant crops. The ROK also anticipated that all residents who agreed to sell their households would be moved by June 2006 and that 315 residents who refused to sell their property would be relocated by June 2007. The ROK also supported the U.S. position not to accept land that still had ROK residents and agreed that areas already vacated would be provided once they became available.

¶15. (S) Kwon informed Lawless that an expert group had been contracted to start a feasibility study to minimize landfill at Camp Humphreys. Once the feasibility study was concluded at the end of April, landfill would commence. Kwon also commented that the landfill project would reduce flooding at Camp Humphreys. Lawless welcomed the opportunity to review the study with Kwon in the near future.

¶16. (S) In response to U.S. questions about the Master Plan (MP) the ROK side explained that it was confident it would be completed by the end of May, but that the figures in the initial master plan (IMP) only represented rough estimates. If the projected expenditures exceeded the amounts initially set in the IMP, the ROK would have to seek National Assembly approval for expenditures greater than initial estimates. Despite Lawless' repeated and direct requests for a copy of the IMP and its associated estimated budget given to the National Assembly at the time when the Yongsan Relocation Plan was approved, ROK representatives dodged and ignored this request. The ROK representatives also said that construction of known facilities and locations could not begin until the MP was approved and the environmental impact assessment was completed. Turning to the construction of the new USFK/UNC/Combined Forces Command Headquarters (CFC HQ), the ROK representative informed Lawless that the HQ is part of the Yongsan Relocation Plan, and as such, the HQ program must be designed by the ROK after the completion of the MP. Responding to a request to relocate small units stationed at Yongsan to existing facilities at Camp Humphreys the ROK agreed to consider the matter if a formal request was made.

¶17. (S) When asked by Lawless when the Program Management Office (PMO) would release the Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the ROK representative replied that the RFQ was almost finished. However, there were some minor disagreements with USFK, thus holding the final release. Lawless pressed the ROK to release the RFQ since projects were being delayed pending its release. The ROK side agreed to release the document as soon as the PM agreements are concluded.

Press Release  
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¶18. (U) In coordination with the U.S. side, MND issued the following press release:

(Begin text)

Seoul, Republic of Korea -- The ROK and U.S. held the Seventh ROK-U.S. Security Policy Initiative, headed by Assistant Minister Kwon, An Do from ROK and DUSD Lawless from the U.S., on the 21st of March 2006, at the Ministry of Defense.

Both sides agreed to continuously discuss the "Joint Vision Study of the ROK-U.S. Alliance" and to report the results at SCM 2006.

Concerning the ROK exercise of wartime OPCON, the study plan of the Combined Working Group was reviewed and the future milestones for the way ahead was discussed. Both sides reaffirmed the basic principle of reporting the wartime OPCON related Roadmap at SCM 2006.

Concerning USFK relocation, the U.S. expressed its appreciation for ROK's efforts, and both sides exchanged opinions on key issues such as the current status of the USFK relocation project, task priorities & procedures, etc.

(Environmental remediation (pending questions))

Through extensive discussions on the standpoint of both ROK and U.S., both sides improved the mutual understanding on the differences. Both sides agreed to continue the required essential discussions.

VERSHBOW